

MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

Volume 8 Issue 12 – December 1990

Dallas

Video Toaster Arrives!

First Look At A New Video Appliance

by David Johnson

It's true! The toaster stopped being "vaporware", and has arrived on the scene. This is exciting news for anyone interested in (or devoted to) the Amiga, regardless of their interest in video. There are four main pieces of software associated with the toaster: Switcher, ToasterPaint, CG and LightWave 3D. We will first look at the Video Toaster itself then briefly cover the accompanying software.

Why did they call it "The Toaster" anyway?

This has been one the most frequently asked questions in my store for the last week or two. NewTek wants everyone to think of the toaster as a "video appliance". An essential piece of equipment to anyone working in video that is priced so reasonably that cost is not an issue. This may seem to be a bit of a stretch for something that costs \$1595, but for a video professional that is an insignificant amount of money based on what it enables him to do.

The Video Toaster is a hardware/software combination that allows the user to perform many of the "special effects" that one sees on television with their Amiga. The board itself is made-up of two boards mounted face-to-face which reside in the video slot of any member of the Amiga 2000 family. It has four Video input connectors, and two video output connectors. All six connectors are "BNC" type connectors, as is required on any professional level equipment. The top four connectors can be fed with any type of composite video signal that is "genlockable". That means you can come into the toaster with any combination of cameras, videotape decks or laser disc players. One thing that must be remembered is that the signals coming in have to be run through "Time Base Correctors" (TBC's), in order for the toaster to "sync" them together and use them.

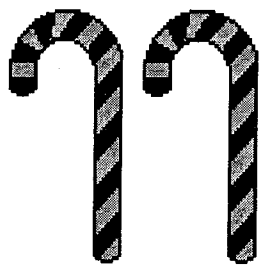
The Switcher

The switcher software is what you use to actually "boot" the toaster. It has an interface screen that includes four rows of eight icons across the top which are the various wipes, fades, dissolves, etc. that the toaster is capable of doing. These icons NewTek calls "Croutons". There are four banks of thirty-two of these croutons which are accessed as "A,B,C,D". You also have a bank of buttons for your "video in" selections, a bank for your "fade to" selections and a bank for the overlay image. Each of the effects has three preset speeds (S,M,F) which work with an "auto" button to do the effect. There is also a graphic "T" bar which you can "grab" and move as you wish. The toaster has framegrabbing and still store capability, these are also accessed through the switcher software. You are able to store and retrieve as many as 1000 still frames (depending on disk space). There are two framebuffers that are used to store frames for immediate integration into your presentation. These are compatible with most of the croutons. This allows you to do transitions from any of the four video sources or the two framebuffers to any of those six devices. These transitions include flying a live video screen off and flying a different one on, also the wipes, dissolves and "blinds" type effects we've become accustomed to on television. Even after all of the pre-shipment publicity I am still amazed at everything this device will allow you to do.

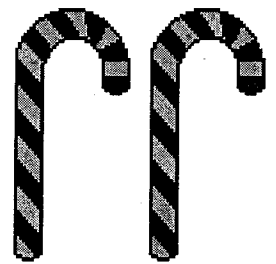
The Slices

As mentioned earlier there are three ancillary programs that come bundled with the toaster apart from the switcher software itself. NewTek refers to these as "slices". The first of these slices is ToasterPaint.

ToasterPaint is a true 24-bit paint program. It gives you the capability of painting with 16.8 million colors. The way this is done is through the toaster's framebuffers.



AMAZING
Computers



Don't Miss

AMAZING'S Christmas Party !!!

Saturday Dec. 15th 10 am - 6 pm at both stores !

Specials on hardware, memory and software !

Featuring Applied Engineering products at unbelievable prices for your holiday gift giving !

See the VIDEO TOASTER !

Drawings for free software throughout the day !

Special prizes courtesy of **APPLIED ENGINEERING !**

Check out the Laser Disc system !

XMAS Special

NEC 90 Postscript Laser printer - ONLY \$1,859

**Village on the Parkway
5100 Beltline Rd. Suite 896
Dallas, Tx. 75240
214 / 386-8383**

**Ridglea Village on Camp Bowie
3105 A Winthrop
Ft. Worth, Tx. 76116
817 / 735-9699**

Open Mon - Sat 10 - 6 Thursdays til 8

**MC, Visa, American Express, Discover & the AMAZING Card accepted
Be sure and ask about your User Group Discount Same Day Shipping**

The TrumpCard 500

Experiences With My First Hard Drive & Expansion System

by Allen W. Wadle

Well, I am finally the owner of a hard disk for my Amiga 500. I have had my system for about 3 1/2 years. It includes the Amiga 500, external floppy, memory at 1 meg, modem, and printer. The prices for hard drives had finally come down to the point that I could justify the investment. I had a hard time deciding what system to get because I am basically cheap. I was wanting something with more than 20 meg since my estimate was that I would devour approximately 15 meg immediately. I also imposed the constraint that \$500 was my upper limit. Locally I could get the Commodore 20 meg drive for \$500 + tax from Amazing, but I was wanting at least 40 meg, and all of the drives they had that were that size for the 500 cost around \$700. Computer Emporium checked on getting a Supra 40 meg for about \$550, only to find that Supra was switching to their new XP series that was more expensive. I saw adds for Trumpcard that included a 48 meg drive for the price that I was wanting to spend. I ended up ordering a Trumpcard 500 Hard Disk Expansion System with Seagate ST157N-1 48 meg 28 ms hard drive. This is a "ready to plug in and use" system. For the Amiga 500 that means that it includes the disk controller card, hard drive, and a box to hold it all that sits on the left hand side of the keyboard as it plugs into the side expansion port. The price from Computability was \$519 total (no extra charges for shipping).

I have to admit that I encountered some problems. My belief now is that the only "real" problem was that one of the jumpers (for auto-boot or not) was not in the position that the instructions said. I can't say that I was exactly pleased with Computability when I sought help in determining why I couldn't get the drive to work with my system. However, I can say that I was extremely pleased with the people at Interactive Video Systems (IVS) who make the Trumpcard. Since I don't have the 1.3 Kickstart ROM in my computer, I can't boot from the hard disk. I now know of two problem indications of having the 1.2 Kickstart ROM coupled with having the jumper on the Trumpcard controller set for "auto-boot". The indication when trying to install the drive is an error message insisting that the device is not connected. The indication when trying to boot is a flashing power light and the prompt for inserting the Workbench disk never appearing. It only takes about 5 minutes to remove 4 screws from the bottom of the expansion chassis, change the position of the auto-boot jumper, and replace the 4 screws.

After successfully getting the drive up, I noticed that my start-up memory was approximately 50K less than usual. This was caused by the drive being set up with two partitions. After re-formatting the drive so that it was

only one partition and removing some resident commands (since the disk is so fast) I am basically back to the startup memory that I am used to with a floppy based system. This may sound like a lot of work for not much payoff, but remember that I only have one meg of memory. Since I set up the disk as one partition, I am using the protection bits to try and protect against accidentally clobbering something (remove write and delete privilege).

Perhaps others can also learn from another of my mistakes. It can be dangerous to play with the startup

"There is no way that I could be more pleased with the performance of the Trumpcard 500 Expansion System."

files on the hard drive, since you may be left in a mode where you can't change files on the hard drive if errors are encountered and the startup sequence aborts. It would be much safer to copy the files to a floppy and try executing them from there before committing them to the hard disk.

There is no way that I could be more pleased with the performance of the Trumpcard 500 Expansion System. At Amazing Computers I had often thought that the faster response I saw was because of faster CPUs (68020 or such as compared to the 68000 in my 500). I now know that it was mainly just the response of the hard disk. I had initially intended on just putting programs on the hard disk and leaving all of my user files on floppy. The unbelievable increase in speed has changed my mind, and I now have almost everything on the hard disk. My A/C BASIC compiler can now roar through compilations at upwards of 1000 lines/minute. Saving files from my word processor is so fast that if you blink you'll miss the fact that any disk I/O has happened at all. I've now been using the system for about 4 weeks and have encountered absolutely no problems.

My final purchase to support the hard drive was a hard drive backup program. I purchased Quarterback from Amazing (support your local store whenever possible) for a reasonable price and have found it super easy to use.

My recommendation is for anyone who can afford a hard drive to definitely get one. It is almost like having a new computer. I would also highly recommend the Trumpcard based on its performance as well as the helpfulness of the people that make it. In addition to the expansion systems for the 500, they also sell the same items as cards to be installed in the 2000. Be careful of

➔ Page 5

Metropolitan Computer Products

P a n a s o n i c BLOW-OUT

WJ-MX12

S-VHS SWITCHER

List \$3000.00

Now \$2450.00

AG - 1960

S VHS Edit Deck

List \$1300.00

Now \$950.00

AG - A95

Edit Controler

List \$450.00

Now \$325.00

CT - 1381 VY

S VHS Monitor

List \$390.00

Now \$315.00

800 E. Arapaho Road Suite 110
Richardson, Texas 75081
214 - 437 - 9119

The SuperDisks

Library Information
From Harold Williams

The MCCC SuperDisk collection continues to grow. The second disk/file utility disk was added in October. This month's SuperDisk review will cover SD-DiskUtil2. There are 10 utility programs included on this SuperDisk. Each program comes with complete documentation. Here is a quick rundown of the included utilities.

DCopy is a disk nibbler. This copier will duplicate some copy protected disks. It is not as powerful as NIB (included on SD-DiskUtil) but will copy some disks that NIB cannot handle.

DFrags displays the state of fragmentation of the files on a disk. When files become fragmented disk access can be much slower. DFrags can help you determine which disks (or partitions) would benefit from being reorganized. The simplest procedure for reorganizing a disk is to file copy all the files to a new disk. A hard drive partition can be reorganized by doing a full backup, then formatting the partition (use the quick option), and finally doing a complete restore of the files.

DiskSpeed is the current standard utility for determining the speed of a hard drive. DiskSpeed has options for determining the intensity of the test. There is also an option to execute the test with the system under stress. Stress can be created by heavy CPU or DMA activity. Although DiskSpeed is most useful for testing hard drives, it can be used with any disk device.

FixDisk will attempt to restore data that has been lost or corrupted. When a file is deleted or corrupted FixDisk may be able to restore the file. FixDisk may be able to restore damaged tracks. This is one of those utilities you hope you will never need!

FMS provides a technique for creating as many as 32 "floppy drives" on your hard drive. These simulated floppy drives can be either fast file system or the standard file system. I use this device for creating/modifying the SuperDisks. I have the advantage of hard drive speed and I can use DiskCopy to move back and forth between regular floppies.

LockDevice is a software equivalent of the little plastic tab found on floppies. This command will prevent write and format commands for any device. This is most useful for hard drives.

MRBackup is a complete hard disk backup utility. MRBackup will create backups from one Amiga device to another. The most common backup procedure is from hard disk to floppy.

RRDisk is a recoverable ram disk. RRDisk supports up to 32 units. The ram disk is bootable under WorkBench 1.3. RRDisk is not fixed in size but expands and collapses to fit the size of the data.

SID is the most complete directory utility available. This utility was included on SD-WBUtil2. When SD-DiskUtil2 was created I moved SID to this disk and filled SD-WBUtil2 with several new utilities. This seemed like a more logical arrangement. SID makes all types of file manipulation simple. Copying, moving, renaming, and deleting files are all handled with just a point and click. SID will display pictures, play sounds, unarc packed files, and edit files using user defined utilities. This is probably the single most useful utility available for the Amiga!

TurboBackup is a disk copy utility. It will copy standard AmigaDOS disks. TurboBackUp uses a full screen point and click interface. Disks can be copied from/to DF0:, DF1:, DF2: and DF3:.

The SuperDisks are available at each Amiga chapter meeting at the treasurer's table.



The TrumpCard 500 (Continued From Page 3)

some places advertising the Trumpcard. What I purchased was an expansion system that comes completely assembled and formatted. There are some places that sell you the pieces of this and you have to put it together. One place I called like this advised me that if it didn't work after I put it together that it would probably be because of something I did, but that they could assemble it for me. Note that their assembled price plus postage was more than what I paid to Computability for the package.

CONCLUSION: The Trumpcard 500 Hard Disk Expansion System is a good product offered at a very reasonable price (\$519 for 48 meg) and made by a dependable company (Interactive Video Systems) that tries to answer questions from customers. Having a hard disk is almost like having a new computer.

Secretary's Corner

John Malmstrom

Congratulations and kudos for Craig Bird were the order of the day at the November Board of Directors meeting. He did a fantastic job organizing our very successful METCOM 90. Of course Craig was quick to point out that success of any such effort is seldom due to one individual and thanked everyone who worked visibly and behind the scenes to make METCOM 90 what it was. To that, I'd like to add a personal thanks to Judy Williams, Evelyn Raecke, and Edna Malmstrom for their usual long day's work at the registration tables. We were

pretty busy at the membership booth, too. 57 people took advantage of our 13/12 offer and either joined or extended their membership.

The board received and approved a petition from 27 individuals to form a new chapter to be known as Amiga West. This chapter proposes to meet on the second Thursday of each month in the western part of Fort Worth. Part of the initial membership will come from existing chapters, but a chapter meeting in that part of the Metroplex will surely draw new members who might not otherwise join in our fun. Stay

tuned for more details.

We also approved the purchase of Harv Harris' excellent tax program in C=64, C=128, and Amiga versions. This program features full computation and printing (directly on IRS forms) of the 1040, Schedules A, B, C, D, E, F, SE, and Forms 2106, 2441, and 3903. These should be ready for distribution at chapter meetings this month. Look for it!

See you at the Christmas party! – or for those of you whose mailman spends a week or two reading the newsletter before delivering it, "Hope I saw you at the Christmas party! We really had a good time."

The Video Toaster (Continued From Page 1)

You actually paint in HAM mode (4096 colors) and then "render" the image to the buffer. The image that goes out on the buffer (to a monitor, or to video tape) is then 24-bit. ToasterPaint is a very powerful, full featured paint program that is extremely similar to Digi-Paint 3. It has all the tools that you have come to expect from an Amiga paint program with the added advantage of 16.8 million color output. The difference between a painting in 4096 colors and the same painting in 16.8 million colors has to be seen to be believed. One interesting side note for Art Department users is that the 24-bit files that "TAD" saves can be loaded directly into ToasterPaint and then rendered out to the buffer. This enables you to send Sculpt, or Turbo files out in 24-bit.

The next slice is the Character Generator. This is a titling program with many of the features that you see in stand alone titling packages. It has about 20 fonts available with several different effects that are used commonly in Television work (such as the crawl across the bottom of the screen used for tornado warnings, election coverage, and other disasters).

The final slice is Light Wave 3D which is a very full featured 3D modeling and animation program. It has a very friendly interface and will get even the novice 3D animator up and running very quickly. It is a very powerful program with many objects included, several textures, bump mapping, image mapping and shadows. There are two important points to remember about Light Wave: first, it is not a ray-tracing program, secondly, it is

only a 24-bit animation system. This means that in the first place it does not do true reflection of surrounding objects (the way Turbo Silver or Sculpt-4D does). In the second place it will not create animations that you can load onto disk and play back on another Amiga. In order to do an animation you must render the frames individually out through the toaster buffer, to a still video recorder. This by no means implies that you cannot utilize Light Wave without investing in a still video deck. You can create single frames (pictures) that can be rendered out and then saved as "still stores" to be called up later by the toaster. Light Wave will automatically import objects created in Videoscape or Sculpt-4D.

In Conclusion

The toaster is an exciting piece of equipment that is good news for all Amiga users. It should contribute greatly to the acceptance of the Amiga as a high powered business application machine. I have heard several people comment that the desktop video market seems to be a very small niche for Commodore to pin their hopes on. I feel that the same could have been said about the desktop publishing market back at the beginning of the Mac. I think that there is a huge market waiting to discover the uses for desktop video and the Amiga, and that the Toaster is going to be instrumental in bringing Amiga to the forefront of the next wave of productivity – Desktop Broadcasting.

Classic Board Games

Review by Harold Williams

Backgammon is my favorite board game. But, since other backgammon players are kinda scarce, I don't get to play very often. Merit Software has just provided two solutions to that problem with the release of Scott Lamb's Classic Board Games. Classic Board Games is designed to allow you to play Chess, Checkers or Backgammon against the computer. Or you can play against a human opponent either on a single computer or with two computers connected by telephone.

Classic Board Games (wow that's a long name, let's just go with CBG for the rest of this article) comes on a single non-copy protected disk. There is off disk copy protection of the manual lookup variety. I hate the growing collection of wheels, cards, and manuals but this is the best of the copy protection schemes. CBG implements this procedure in the most painless way possible. The text lines are numbered and only the first letter of the specified word is required. The lack of disk copy protection means you can make backups of the disk and you can install CBG on a hard drive.

Each of the game boards can be viewed in either 2-D or 3-D modes. Also, the boards can be turned to display any of the four sides. Each game is accompanied by digitized sounds of the game play. The roll of the dice in backgammon is particularly nice. Each game can be played on three levels of difficulty (novice, expert, and master) when playing against the computer. Games can be saved, then later loaded and continued. Games can also be replayed. This feature steps through all of the moves of a game. Watching a game that you just completed can be a real learning experience. A single standard intuition style interface is used to control the selection of games and options. Each game plays by the standard rules. Chess supports castling and la passant, backgammon supports the doubling die.

CBG's chess game is aimed at a different player than most of the computerized chess games. You don't have to be a grand master to compete here. This is chess for the rest of us. Beginners can win at the novice level. The master level will be challenging to most chess players. I can't really evaluate the checkers game. If I played checkers with a four year old, I'm sure I would lose. I've just never had an interest in checkers. I played CBG

checkers twice at the novice level and got clobbered both times. Maybe the other members of my family will give the checkers game a better workout. The novice, expert, and master levels of backgammon are designed differently from the other games. The backgammon levels don't determine the computers expertise but rather the style of play. At the novice level the computer plays a very aggressive, attacking game. Choosing the master level causes the computer to become very defensive and cautious. Selecting the level of difficulty in backgammon is more like selecting different opponents. I've played several matches and have found the computer to be most challenging at the novice (aggressive) level. A different player might find one of the other settings a stronger challenge.

The telecommunication ability of CBG really sets this software apart from other computer games. Playing these games across the telephone requires that both players own CBG. The software handles the dialing or answering of the phone. There are no tricky serial port parameters to worry about except the baud rate. Opponents' phone numbers can be saved to disk. After the modem connection is established, the two players can "chat" by means of two single line message areas. One message area displays incoming "chat" from your opponent. The other message area accepts input from your keyboard and sends your message to your opponent. During play you see and hear your opponent's moves. I played a couple of games of backgammon across the phone. My opponent was Scott Lamb, the author of CBG. We had a little difficulty the first time we played. I was apparently running too many background tasks. I eliminated the extra tasks and we tried again. CBG performed flawlessly. Harold performed poorly. Scott clobbered me in both games (he clearly has a secret cheat mode built in). CBG is also available for Macintosh and IBM computers. That means CBG can teleconnect with your friends that erred when selecting a computer, but have had the good sense to purchase CBG.

I do have a couple of complaints. I would like to see a simpler hard drive installation procedure. I would also like to be able to start CBG in backgammon mode (it automatically selects chess). But these are small complaints.

Classic Board Games is priced in the low twenties (I found it at Amazing Computers in Fort Worth). If you enjoy chess, checkers or backgammon CBG is a must.

SOF-TEX

Offering Quality Service & Repair
For Disk Drives and Computers

Hours: 10AM to 8PM
Monday thru Saturday
(817) 577-0410 (Metro)

Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design

The Latest Chapter in the Search For the Ultimate Golf Game
by Bill Raecke

As many of you know, I have been interested in golf games on the computer for some time now, always in search of one a little better than the last one. I have made a habit of buying most of them as they hit the market. My quest has taken me through *Mean 18* (with graphics so bad they strain the eyes), *World Tour Golf* (which gave us better graphics and much more realistic green play), and *World Class Leader Board* (which gave us excellent graphics but rather unrealistic courses with no hills on the fairways and greens that slope in only one direction). But I'm not writing this to review the other golf games – I only mention them to put the subject of this review in perspective. And let me simply start out by saying that *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design* corrects the shortcomings of the other games and gives us the best, most realistic game of computer golf I have yet tried.

There are really two products to review here even though they are sold as a single package. The golf game itself is the main reason for purchasing the product but the course design package is of such depth and complexity that it deserves its own review. So I will cover them one at a time. Before I get into that, however, let's start with a few of the basics. The disks are not copy protected – a big plus. That means there is no problem making backups to protect your (considerable) investment. Copy protection is provided through one of the code wheels that have recently been gaining in popularity. Although this is somewhat of an inconvenience, it sure beats not being able to make a backup. Given the choice, I would opt for this or a manual based lookup procedure over copy protected disks any day. The implementation of the protection in this instance is particularly nice – once the game has been started, you will only have to enter a code once. After that point you may change courses or change players and it just keeps on humming. As with most games that are not copy protected, this one is easily installed on a hard drive. The hard drive installation is simple and painless, with no ASSIGN commands or other unnecessary complexities to get in the way.

The only complaint I have in this regard is that there is no icon supplied to start the game. Hard drive users

are expected to go to the CLI, change the current directory to where Jack Nicklaus lives, and type a command to start the game. I would much prefer to start games using icons, so I built my own. I grabbed the title screen using *Hermit* (from the library); pulled it into *Deluxe Paint III*, made a brush of the part of the screen that I wanted; pulled it into *The Art Department* to reduce the number of colors, change the colors to those used on my Workbench and reduce the size of the image; and, finally, pulled the brush into *IconMaster* (from the library) to turn the brush into a project icon. Now I am able to run the program from an icon using an IconJ (from the library) script built into the icon itself.

Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf

In *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf* (JNUG) there are two ways of playing: either STROKE or SKINS play. Stroke play is what most of us are more familiar with – where the object is simply to hit the ball the fewest number of times. In skins play the object is more complicated – the object is to win the most money. To that end, a dollar amount is assigned to each hole and the best score on that hole takes the prize. In case of a tie, the dollar amount is carried forward to the next hole. An interesting option.

As with most computer golf games, JNUG allows from one to four players to participate. For each player you may enter a name of up to eight characters. Once entered, the players are automatically entered on the "Club Membership List" so that the information and related options do not have to be entered again. The options for each player are for:

- MALE or FEMALE
- Skill level: BEGINNER or EXPERT – at the Beginner level, wind will not affect your shot as greatly, hooks and slices are less extreme, and clubs are automatically selected for you.
- Tee: PRO, MEN'S or LADIES' – The Pro tee is the farthest away, and the Ladies tee is the closest.

An unusual option is the ability to make a computer

opponent part of your group. The game has nine different built-in computer opponents (five men and four women) each of whom has his or her own set of weakness and strengths. The opponents from which you can choose range from Nancy D, a beginner, to Jack N, the Golden Bear himself. This option can add spice to any group, whether you are playing alone or with one or two other human opponents.

JNUG comes with two courses: Muirfield Village, a real course, designed by Jack Nicklaus and located in Dublin, Ohio; and The Bear's Track, designed especially for the computer by Jack Nicklaus. Other courses may be purchased separately or may be built using the course designer.

Once into the game, after player selection and course selection is complete, there are a number of options available. Naturally, one of these is to "Play a Round". But, in addition, you can "Practice a Hole", go to the "Driving Range", go to a "Practice Green", "Change Course", or "Change Players". As mentioned earlier, none of these options will cause you to have to re-enter a code from the code wheel. The options for practice are nice for first time players to become accustomed to the operation of the game before tackling the opposition. After the initial familiarization, most will undoubtedly wish to do their practice on the courses, but the options are welcome nonetheless.

But I've rambled on for some time now - let's talk about the game itself. First thing you will see after selecting "Play a Round" is a screen that tells you the course conditions. These conditions will be selected at random by the game - just like real weather. You can modify them if you wish to do some practice with specific conditions. The variables include wind speed and direction and the condition of the greens. Then you are shown an overview of the hole you are about to play. The overhead view shows such things as par, distance to the pin from each tee (pro, men's, or ladies') and the location of trees, bunkers, water, cart paths, the pin location (which varies randomly), and just about everything else you might want to know about the hole. If you would like to see what it looks like from the ground, press the letter "V" for View. The game will ask you where you would like to view the course from. You click on the position and it will show you what the course looks like from that spot facing the pin. Impressive stuff! Clicking the left mouse button or pressing the space bar will take you to the tee.

The view provided by this game is the best I have seen. Trees and other objects are automatically scaled by the software so they look in perspective. Rather than a flat patch of ground leading to the green, JNUG will present you with an undulating terrain complete with hills, valleys, slopes in multiple directions - in other words, the same kind of terrain you are likely to face on a real

golf course. That view takes up the major portion of the screen. Across the bottom are some stats and club selection information. The stats will show the current player's name, the current hole and par, the current stroke for the player, the distance to the pin, and the player's total score for the course so far in terms of par (5 over, even, etc.). In the lower right hand portion of the screen is the wind direction meter and the strength indicator. (On the green these same indicators are used to show the direction and strength of the break.) Across the very top of the screen is a narrow black bar. There is a white spot that indicates the direction of your shot (drag it with the left button to aim your shot), a left and right boundary marker (click outside the boundary marker to shift your view to the right or left), and, if you are not on the green, a marker that indicates the direction of the pin. Along the right hand side of the screen is a large Power Bar.

Here's the way it works. First you select your club. A suggested club will be provided for those playing at the Beginner level. For Experts, the game will select a Driver off the tee, a 3 Wood on the fairway, a Sand Wedge in bunkers, and a Putter on the green. Beyond that, you need to select your own club. Not sure of the relative distances? Click on the wind strength indicator and a menu will appear. One of the choices is a club distance chart. Of course, you must remember that club distances will be affected by wind speed and direction, hitting out of the rough, etc. After you have selected your club you must aim your shot. (Don't forget to allow for wind.) Then you move your mouse pointer over to the Power Bar. The first click on the Power Bar starts the swing, the second controls the strength of the swing, the third will control hook or slice. And, once again, don't forget that even the straightest shot will be diverted by the wind. Once you hit the ball you get to watch its progress. And remember all those neat features mentioned earlier about hills, valleys and slopes? Well, not only do they look nice, but they



affect game play as well. For example, if your shot lands on an uphill slope it will not travel as far. Or in another instance it might tend to bounce toward one side or another.

The game has an Instant Replay feature. Immediately after your shot, if you want to see once more how impressive (or stupid) it was, click on the wind strength indicator and select "Instant Replay" from the menu. Even more impressive is the "Reverse Angle Replay". Click on this option and it is as if there were a TV camera positioned just ahead of where the ball will land. You can see yourself (or at least the computer representation of yourself) swinging, and the ball traveling toward you to land virtually at your feet. This can be really fun to find out "what went wrong" when you wind up behind a tree or in the water. The "Reverse Angle Replay" is only available on shots of 50 yards or more.

On the green, everything works about the same. The only major difference will be a grid that is placed on the display to indicate the break. Unlike most other golf game, JNUG provides for complex greens. Slopes will not be in a constant direction or a constant degree. The grid will help you determine just how to plan your shot by showing where the green rises or falls. You may turn the grid off if you like, but the shading used by the program is not as effective as the grid. (When do we get our 3-D holographic imaging monitors?)

J ack Nicklaus' Course Design

For the sake of explanation, let's assume that we want to build an entire new course from the ground up. The first place you will find yourself after firing up the program is on a screen that will ask you what course we want to edit. It is really nothing but a large file requestor. From this screen we can choose to EDIT an existing course, COPY an existing course and edit it, or CREATE a new course. Let's click on the CREATE NEW COURSE button. Now we are asked to select a land plot. There are three basic land plots built into the designer: seaside, parkland and mountain. Pick one.

The first thing we will probably want to do is to edit this basic plot of land. Click on the button that is marked LAND PLOT. This is where we edit the topographical features of the landscape. It works kind of like a paint program. We can choose to "paint" with water, bunker, out of bounds, and cart path. Naturally, we can select different shapes to paint with as well. We can also go to a screen to place objects (trees, rocks, etc.) on the land plot, or we can click on the gadget labeled PLACE HILLS. This is probably the most impressive feature of the editor. We paint the area which needs its elevation changed - this can be to either raise an area (build a hill) or lower an area (build a valley or a lake or river bed). We select the hill height (in feet) using up and down buttons. (To build a valley, use negative numbers.) Then select the hill type (grade): Steep, Medium, or Gentle. Then we click on the button marked BUILD HILLS. The elevation of the terrain that we painted is automatically changed by the number of feet specified, at the angle of elevation (grade)

indicated.

After modifying the terrain, we may want to take a look at what we have done. Click on VIEW PLOT. The program asks where we want to view the plot from. Click on a point and a wedge appears that represents a field of view. This can be turned in any direction. Pick a direction, click again, and we are shown how the plot appears from that point and facing in that direction with all the newly created hills, water, etc. in place. I find this amazing.

There are a couple of other things that can be modified on the land plot itself. There is a set of pre-defined objects associated with each land plot. By objects, I mean trees, bushes, rocks, etc. These can be edited using simple paint tools and new ones can be created from scratch or can be pulled in from other courses. In a like fashion, each land plot has a 360 degree background view associated with it. This too can be modified using a simple set of paint tools.

OK. Let's assume that we are done with the basic land plot. Now it's time to go to COURSE ROUTING. This is where we lay out the basic routing of the holes. Each hole requires a maximum of four clicks of the mouse. The first click is the tee and the last is the pin. There may be one or two doglegs. Simply place your mouse pointer and go for it. Current yardage and par for the hole and for the course is always displayed. (The par may be modified as desired.)

Once the basic routing is complete, we will want to edit each hole individually. We are allowed to edit the terrain just as we could edit the land plot. We can "paint" with water, cart path, bunker and out of bounds. But here we can also "paint" with Tee, Rough, Fairway, and Green. This is where we get the hole just the way we want it. We can modify the hills and valleys here too. And this is where we will place most of our objects. At any point in the editing procedure, we can take a look at the hole using the VIEW option. As before, we simply click on the point to view from, select the angle of view and there we are. Everything - objects, hills, water, bunkers - appear just where we placed them. And everything is automatically scaled to give a realistic perspective.

S ummary

So - do I like it? You bet! This is the most advanced and complete golf system I have seen so far. (A golf system, in my opinion, should contain both a game and a course designer.) The game play is the most realistic I have found and the course designer blows me away. Is it perfect? Nope. There is just one thing omitted from the Course Designer. When editing the course 360 degree background view, the tools provided are rather primitive. This would probably be acceptable if there were a way to export and import the background as a brush so that it could be taken into Deluxe Paint for modification. The same thing applies to editing objects. This omission is the most obvious indication of the game's roots in the MS-DOS world.

But this is a relatively minor complaint. If you like computer golf, you'll love this one.

Amiga Library News

Public Domain and Shareware Picks From Bill Raecke

Color Catch by Preben Nielsen

Color Catch is a deceptively simple program which fills a need that has existed for some time. At least it's something that I have needed for some time. Some programs do not give you the option of changing screen colors (SuperPlan comes immediately to mind). This is OK so long as their choice of colors is acceptable. But in the case of SuperPlan, the colors are taken from the Workbench. Obviously I like my Workbench colors. But I do not run my Workbench in interlace mode. When SuperPlan comes up in interlace mode using my Workbench colors the screen jumps around so much the characters all but fall off the screen.

Of course there are programs that allow you to change the colors of any screen (XColour is the one I use) but there is no way to save and restore the colors set that way. Having to re-adjust colors each time I run SuperPlan is not a solution at all. Up 'til now I have gotten around the problem using the SetPrefs program. I had a script (executed via Workbench) that would change my Workbench colors to something acceptable for interlace, run SuperPlan, and then change the Workbench colors back again. It worked but it was clumsy.

But now there's Color Catch. Here's the way it works. You set the colors of the top screen using the program of your choice (such as XColour). Then run Color Catch. It will open up a small window on your Workbench that has just three gadgets. The bottom gadget lets you choose whether to save the file with an icon or without, the middle gadget lets you specify a file name to save to, and the top gadget does it. Clicking on the top gadget will save the colors of the topmost screen to an EXECUTABLE file. So to save the colors, you pull down the screen that you are trying to save the colors from, click the gadget, and you have a file with those colors in it. To restore those colors, simply get the screen that you wish to change colors in the front and execute the file – either from the Workbench or from the CLI. Very simple. Very neat. Of course, this is best done from a script or by using IconJ.

Another thought. This program can also be used to transfer colors from one program to another. Even when color adjustments are allowed for in a program, it can sometimes be very difficult to get the colors just the way you want them. But if you have another set of colors that would be just right, you could use this program to capture the colors from the first program, restore them to the second, and then save them as the defaults.

Any way you use it, it's a neat idea. Color Catch has been released into the public domain. You'll find it this month on MCCC-A_235.

Spread by Richard Krehbiel

I have been asked several times recently if there is a spreadsheet in the MCCC library. For all those who have been asking, here it is. It's not particularly fancy and it's not especially powerful – but its price is a lot more palatable than the commercial programs available (it's free) and it will suffice for most needs. Briefly here are the program's features:

- Worksheet size is 69 rows by 36 columns
- It has all the basic math functions and a SUM function
- It provides for absolute and symbolic cell references in formulas
- It supports inserting and deleting of rows and columns
- It supports cut, copy, paste and erase of single cells
- It allows variable column width

This is all pretty basic stuff, but if you are in need of a very simple spreadsheet without ANY bells and whistles, this may be for you. It's public domain and it's on MCCC-A_235.

Text Plus by Martin Steppeler

Since we have a spreadsheet in the library it's only fitting that we also have a word processor. Text Plus is not the first word processor we have had in the library but it is the latest, and it is a nice one. Word processors are different from text editors mainly by virtue of the fact that they are paragraph oriented rather than line oriented. A text editor is most useful for writing programs or script files. When you type a line, that line will continue until you hit the carriage return key. A word processor is most useful for writing letters, books, or papers. When you type a line, the line will continue until it hits the pre-defined right margin whereupon it will automatically move to the next line. If you need to go back and modify a paragraph, the program will maintain the text properly within the margins regardless of how much text is inserted. There are many text editors in the library – there are only a couple of word processors.

All the normal text functions are supported in Text Plus. You can copy, delete or insert a block of text. You can specify the length of a page and the width of the text. Text search is provided as is search and replace. And of course you can specify the style of text, such as bold or italic. Missing are such nice features as a spelling checker, but you get what you pay for. Text Plus has been released as shareware with a suggested donation of \$15. You can find it on MCCC-A_232.

DJHelper

A Response To Bill Raecke's Review from Gerald Hull, President of Creative Focus

I am most grateful that MCCC News was able to devote some space to a review of DJHelper, my utility program for Hewlett-Packard DeskJets. A considerable amount of thought and effort was put into the product, so I am glad to see that word is starting to get around. The comments of your reviewer, Bill Raecke, are generally accurate and to the point, and most of his critical remarks are fair and helpful. Nonetheless, there are some areas where I feel I can shed some additional light.

To begin with, I would not recommend printing the DJHelper Manual from the middle of the file. It should be obvious that codes to initialize the printer have to be at the beginning. By having the customer print the manual, Creative Focus saved some \$10-15 per unit in printing, packaging, and shipping costs. These savings were passed along directly to the customer: the \$50.00 list price is quite low for a program with these capabilities.

As the review mentions, DJHelper was conceived as a souped-up Preferences targeted to the specific talents of the DeskJet printer. It is optimized for use in conjunction with other printing software. For example, it allows you to easily save and invoke a particular range of printing parameters for each text processing package: different ones for Scribble!, TxEd Plus, PenPal, ProWrite, and so forth.

It was not intended to be a stand-alone printing utility, and therefore may seem a bit awkward for someone who wants to make specific settings for each file sent to the printer. In such circumstances, however, you can often simply use Left-Amiga-N and Left-Amiga-M to switch back and forth between DJHelper and the application software.

The reason why you have to click in file name boxes and other text gadgets before inputting from the keyboard is simple to explain. On any given screen there are a number of boxes and gadgets which can accept keyboard input: you need to inform DJHelper where the input is supposed to go! Many other Amiga File requestors don't have to deal with this complication, permitting them a simpler approach.

I confess that I am flabbergasted that Mr. Raecke finds DJHelper's font conversion results "ugly and unusable". I suspect this has left a misleading impression in the minds of his readers, especially since he did not do a before-and-after comparison, nor checked with results from other conversion programs.

One reason for his dissatisfaction may be the fact that fonts for the DeskJet and DeskJet PLUS (unlike the LaserJet and the new DeskJet 500) do not permit negative offsets. In a very few proportional typefaces this

difference is conspicuous, but only the most demanding user will find it disabling.

For my own part, I am extremely happy with the conversion results: I have enclosed some samples from which you may draw your own conclusions. (The ability they reveal - to go from one font to another on the same page at will - is a not-so-obscure capability provided through the XMIT screen.) Creative Focus, in fact, has released commercially two packages of DJHelper converted LaserJet softfonts: DJFonts Volume One and Volume Two. Each is a three disk collection of some 60 to 80 fonts priced at just \$20 for all three disks. So far customer response has been quite enthusiastic.

Finally, you can indeed control DJHelper without the Intuition interface. By invoking the program with the name of a specific configuration file plus the keyword "exit", it will load in your set of parameters and terminate without ever coming up on the screen. Like any complicated and powerful program, it may take some experimentation and familiarization to learn all the things that DJHelper can do.

Registered owners of the program will soon be informed of a free (except for shipping and handling) upgrade that fixes some bugs, makes some improvements, and brings the program completely up-to-date with respect to the DeskJet 500. Larger scale changes, like an ARExx port and the direct-print capability requested by Mr. Raecke, will be addressed by a major revision scheduled for the first half of 1991.

I hope all this doesn't obscure my pleasure with the exposure that DJHelper has received in the MCCC News. As I remark in the introduction to the manual, future versions of DJHelper will be significantly affected by the kind of feedback your reviewer has provided. Very seldom is it possible to achieve absolute perfection the first time round; the scope and capability of a program like this should and will continue to evolve.

Editor's Note:

I was going to print this article without comment, but after reading it several times, I feel I should make some reply. Apparently I didn't make myself clear enough the first time around and I would like to set the record straight.

Dr. Hull does not recommend printing the manual from the middle of the file. Nor do I. My point was that DeskJets have a bad habit of running out of ink only when they are being used. When this happens thirty-six pages into a forty-six page document, it would be nice to have a restart capability so that one wouldn't have to throw away thirty-six sheets of paper and start over. Such a capability would have been easy to supply and very welcome.

Regarding file requestors, other programs have handled complicated situations more smoothly. Check out PageStream or The Art Department for examples.

My comments regarding font conversions was not intended as a criticism of DJHelper. I merely intended to

warn potential users that all public domain fonts may not convert properly. As I pointed out in my article, those fonts may well have been faulty to begin with. But I can assure everyone that it would not take a very demanding user to find fault with the fonts I converted. In fairness, I have looked at print samples provided by Dr. Hull. They are beautiful. He apparently has a better source for public domain fonts than I.

When I made my comment that I would like to see a way to control DJHelper without the Intuition interface I was well aware that certain settings could be saved in a file and activated via CLI. The type of interface I was envisioning, however, was one where any single print feature could be changed on the fly via a CLI command. Saving a file for every possible combination of settings could very quickly become unmanageable. A full ARexx interface would certainly provide the desired capability.

It is my hope that this will clear up some of the misunderstanding that apparently exists. I still feel, as I did then, that this is an excellent product. I stand by my original review. In summary I stated "If you... have found yourself frustrated by some of the things you cannot do, by all means buy this product... My complaints are mostly personal preferences and may even be fixed in future releases".

Thought For The Month

Give Your Very Best Today

Heaven Knows It Is Little Enough

ATTENTION

Due to the Christmas holiday, the deadline for the January issue of the MCCC News will be December 10.

The MCCC Christmas Party



*The AmeriSuites Hotel
3950 W. Airport Freeway
(South of Airport Fwy between
Esters and Beltline)
Irving, Texas 75062
214-790-1950*

*Saturday, December 8
1:00 pm to 4:30 pm*

*There is a full kitchen
Bring a snack to share
Leave the computer at home*

ARexx

An Introduction by Mathias Sagartz From the New Mexico Commodore User Group Newsletter – DIMensions

The ARexx programming language is about the biggest buzz word being kicked around in the Amiga community today.

Almost every piece of new software, except for games, advertises that it has an "ARexx port", and Commodore is including ARexx with the 2.0 version of the operating system. It appears that at long last, we will have a tool that will help us realize the full potential of the multi-tasking operating system incorporated in our Amigas.

Really neat stuff. Everybody seems to agree on that ... But what is it?

The ARexx articles I've read in the Amiga press have not done well at answering that question – and others – for me. They all seemed to be written for professional programmers, folks with at least 5 years of experience.

This article is for the rest of us. It is an attempt to provide some perspective for our members who have no background or experience with ARexx. I also hope to give those of you with an adventuresome spirit a little nudge toward trying your hand with ARexx.

ARexx is a full-fledged computer language, just like Modula2, Fortran, C and BASIC. It's a modern language, invented in 1985 by an IBM research scientist. Like BASIC, it is an interpreted language, i.e. there is no separate compile step needed to run an ARexx program.

To write an ARexx program, you just make an ASCII file of program statements with your favorite text editor or word processor. The program is run by invoking the interpreter, which marches through the file and executes the statements.

If you are accustomed to programming in other languages, you'll probably find ARexx pretty "free form". Some features that are a bit unusual are:

Typeless data:

Unlike most other languages, you don't have to classify your variables as integer, floating point or string, etc. A variable can have a value of 7.3 at one point in the program and be redefined later as "Randolph".

Variable Arithmetic Precision:

The number of significant digits kept for basic arithmetic operations (add, subtract, multiply or divide) can be whatever you want them to be. If you'd like to keep 87 significant digits, you may do so. Just don't expect the program to run very quickly.

Built-in Functions for Parsing Input:

Probably the most important feature of ARexx is the parsing capability built into many of its commands. It is a simple matter to read a line from a file and store everything on that line up to the first ":" in one variable, then store everything between the ":" and a "/" in a second variable, and finally set a third variable equal to whatever is left over. You then can use a function to examine each of these variables and determine the type of information (numeric, binary, alphabetic, etc.) that is stored in them.

Handling of commands for other applications:

During the execution of an ARexx program, if a line of code cannot be identified as an ARexx instruction, then that instruction is sent automatically to a "host address". This means the command is passed as input to another, predesignated task that is also running at that time.

All that is well and good, but I did say this was not going to be one of those articles written specifically for programmers, didn't I? For most of us, the great strength of ARexx is its ability to communicate easily with other tasks running concurrently on the system. This communication takes place through magical things called message ports. The nice thing about these ports is that in order to use them, you don't need to know very much about them. When a program that has an ARexx port begins execution, it opens a port that can be used to transfer information between itself and an ARexx program.

ARexx constantly monitors the system and keeps a list of all the ports that are open and available for use. For the curious, there is an ARexx command that displays a list of these ports on the screen. The names of the ports usually are chosen so that they can be identified easily with their parent program.

Let's assume ARexx is being used to write "macro" commands for an application. (Simply put, a macro command is a sequence of commands for an application that are grouped together and stored as an entity.) To perform this sequence of commands, the user need not type each command separately. All he/she has to do is to issue one command that invokes the macro, and the sequence of commands is executed automatically.

What makes ARexx useful for writing macros is that an ARexx macro need not be dumb. An ARexx macro normally is executed one command at a time. The first command is sent to the host, and the macro then waits for the host to send back a message that indicates whether the command was executed successfully. The host also can pass back information about the results of the command, and logic programmed into the ARexx macro can adjust what the macro sends back to the host as the next command.

For host programs that get their user input from command lines, the ARexx macro will look very much like a sequence of these commands, perhaps with some logic-type statements mixed in to provide the smarts for the macro. However, many host programs get input from information typed into requestor boxes or mouse selection

of menu items. The authors of these programs must provide a set of "command descriptions" that specify the syntax for the messages ARexx can send to the host to provide equivalent input.

Another element of flexibility provided by an ARexx program is that it is not restricted to communicating with only one host program. An "address" statement can direct a command to any of the available message ports. By using several different ports, ARexx can take information from one host, edit it, modify it, and send the result as input to a different host. In effect, it can become a master controller that unifies different host programs so they can work together. As you can see, ARexx applications can get as sophisticated as you choose to make them.

The user's manual furnished with ARexx is complete, but it is very condensed. It is written well, but it definitely is not intended for the novice programmer. For those who are interested, there is a good beginner-level book entitled *Modern Programming Using Rexx* by O'Hara and Gomberg (Prentice-Hall). The authors presume their audience will be programming on an IBM mainframe, but very little is machine specific. Comparing this book with the user's manual shows that ARexx indeed is a complete implementation of the Rexx programming language.

Commodore itself also should be a source for ARexx information. The manufacturer certainly will include

some sort of basic-level ARexx reference with the 2.0 operating system update.

As an aid to those who want to try their hands with ARexx, I've included a copy of a short program that can be used to try ARexx commands. The Rexxtry program was copied out of the O'Hara and Gomberg reference. Essentially, it will let you do what the immediate mode does for AmigaBASIC. Enter a line of code, and when you hit return, the line will be executed.

Enjoy!

```
/* program to execute a single line of Rexx code from O'Hara and  
Gomberg */
```

```
say "Rexxtry allow you to interactively execute Rexx instructions."  
say "Each instruction string is executed when you press enter."  
say "To end, enter exit."  
do forever /* the exit instruction will terminate the loop */  
    say "Rexxtry"  
    parse pull @line@  
    interpret @line@  
end
```

Amiga Programmer

Applied Engineering seeks an Amiga
machine language programmer.

Please contact:

Harvey Wende, Engineering Manager
Applied Engineering
P. O. Box 5100
Carrollton, TX 75011

Or call (214) 241-0055.

AE
Applied Engineering®
The enhancement experts.

A Division of AE Research Corporation.

BC

BUDGET COMPUTERS
AMIGA – Commodore – I.B.M.

- Used Equipment & Software Bargains
Buy - Sell
- Software Rentals
Business & Games
- Fast, Quality, Inexpensive
Repair Service
- Widest selection
software & accessories
- Helpful, Knowledgeable
Salespeople

"Your Computer Headquarters !"
792-3508 (Metro 817)
1621 New York Ave
Arlington, Tx. 76010

1581 Boot Sector

by Phil Anderson

From the Newsletter of The Arizona Commodore Users Group

For some time I have been trying to figure out a way to protect the boot sector on a 1581 disk from being overwritten when files are written to the disk.

The Bootmaker program (on the test-demo disk) allocates track 1 sector 0 in the BAM (Block Allocation Map) when the boot is created, but the format of the boot sector is such that no valid directory entry can be made that will keep a VALIDATE or COLLECT command from deallocating the BAM entry, thus allowing a save operation to overwrite the boot sector. I did write a short program that reallocates the boot sector and have been using that as an interim fix.

The solution has been before me all along! (Slapping hand on forehead!) Use the Partition Aid (also on the test-demo disk) to create a one block partition on track 1, sector 0, and then use the Bootmaker to write the boot sector. (Ignore the nasty remark in the Partition Aid about not being able to make a partition that size.) It must be done in the above order, because creating the

partition will destroy the boot; do not attempt to open the partition before creating the boot.

The Bootmaker does not look at the directory, it writes directly to the disk. The reason this works is because the drive does not look at the directory when booting. It goes directly to track 1, sector 0 and reads it. If the sector starts with CBM, it is treated as a boot sector. The VALIDATE (COLLECT) command ignores partitions, so the boot sector is permanently protected. The boot may be removed by simply scratching the partition (type CBM) file and then validating the disk. It is said that some people can see through a brick wall if they look long enough. At least I finally got to see the wall.



Club Discounts

**THESE DEALERS OFFER
SPECIAL DISCOUNTS TO
MCCC MEMBERS**

BE SURE TO SHOW YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD

Action Computer

C64, C128, Amiga Repair
2720 Royal Lane
Dallas, Texas 75229
(214) 484-7838

Metropolitan Connecting Point

Amiga Software and Hardware
800 East Arapaho Suite 110
Richardson, Texas 75081
(214) 437-9119

Amazing Computer Systems

Amiga Software and Hardware
5100 Beltline Rd. #896
Dallas, Texas 75240
(214) 386-8383

Software Terminal

Amiga Hardware
P.O. Box 123225
Fort Worth, Texas 76121
(817) 737-3297

Amazing Computer Systems

Amiga Software and Hardware
3105 A Winthrop
Fort Worth, Texas 76116
(817) 735-9699

Sof-Tex

C64, C128, Amiga Repair
(817) 577-0410 (Metro)

Amiga By-The-Loop

Brent Wood

Congratulations to our new club officers (and thanks for volunteering). Elections were held last month – and this month we elect new chapter officers. Chapter nominees are David Owens, president; Barbara Cramer, vice president; Bruce Nelson, treasurer; Gary Wordelmon, secretary; and Gary Campbell, librarian.

Last time David led us through the installation procedure of ARP, the AmigaDOS Replacement Project, which allows you to use rewritten commands from the Project that are smaller and faster than the normal AmigaDOS commands. These are especially helpful if you are running from floppies and need to conserve disk space as the rewritten commands require less disk space. The necessary files and further instructions and information on ARP are currently available from the club library.

Our feature program was presented by Jim O'Flaherty from Preferred Technologies, Inc. Jim showed us some of the new hardware available such as hard disk controllers (the Nexus), RAM expansion boards (the Aries) and mentioned soon to be released products such as the Spectrum frame buffer. Price lists and order

forms were furnished along with a very entertaining presentation. The hardware packages contain some very

friendly software to aid users in the setup and maintenance of each product plus a few extras thrown in. Thanks to Jim and his impressive presentation of some impressive equipment.

The December meeting will be on Tuesday the 11th at 7:30 pm. The planned program includes a LIVE Video Toaster demo by David Johnson of Amazing. Be there to vote for chapter officers and see this amazing product!

Amiga Central

Bill Raecke

It was another excellent meeting. We started by electing the club officers for 1991 and then proceeded to the nominations for chapter officers. Since there is only one nomination for each office, the outcome of the upcoming election won't be much of a surprise, but the election will be held at the December meeting. Come and cast your vote.

Once the business was out of the way, Ray Howard proceeded to tell us everything we wanted to know about hard drives but were afraid to ask. He gave us the answers to a lot of questions we didn't even know we had. I learned a lot. We even got to look at the inside of a hard drive for the first time. Very interesting.

After that, Jim O'Flaherty of Advanced Storage Systems gave us a look at some of their products. The Nexus hard drive controller and memory expansion board, the Sidewinder 250 tape backup system and the Aries memory expansion cards were all shown and discussed. And the accompanying software was shown and demonstrated. All in all it was a very interesting demonstration. Thanks, Jim.

For the December meeting, we are in for a really big treat. Jack Smith will be bringing his Video Toaster for a demonstration. Now I know that by now a lot of you have seen the Toaster in action at other chapter

meetings and at local dealers. But you haven't seen it demonstrated like this. Jack is going to bring in a lot of his video equipment as well as the Toaster to give us a feel for what it is like to use a setup like this in a real studio environment. You won't want to miss this one. I'll look for you there.

Amiga North Dallas

Genny White

The crowd seems to be coming back... at least, there were plenty of folks around to eat "birthday" cake at our chapter's one-year anniversary meeting. We officially approved the slate of club officers for next year, and nominations were made for our chapter officers, to be voted on this month: President – Craig Bird, Vice President – Danny White, Treasurer – Forrest McKinney, Secretary – Genny White (me!), Librarian – William Dockendorf. Please come on December 19th, when we will welcome special guest Don Dusky, Commodore's District Sales Educational Director, who met many of use at METCOM. December is traditionally a "fun" meeting... bring your favorite game software! Hopefully, a couple of Amigas will be available.

Our Shareware/PD pick-of-the-month was the collection of animations by Eric Schwartz, many of which have been donated to user groups and are available on our club disks. We also got word of a 50% User Group Discount available from Virtual Reality Laboratories, Inc. for such products as Distant Suns and Vista! Also mentioned: the programming SIG planned its first official meeting for November 17th. Hopefully we will hear about their exploits at the next meeting. We had 4 nice doorprizes provided by Amazing and Metropolitan: "Empire", "Skychase", "Moonmist", and the ever-popular Amiga T-shirt! Thanks, dealers!!!

Our first special guest was Jim O'Flaherty from Preferred Technologies, an Amiga hardware developer located here in Dallas and staffed by frustrated "Amigaphites"

who decided to do something to fill the gaps they saw in Amiga hardware possibilities. Jim proudly introduced their Nexus Hard Drive Controller, which works with the 2000, 2500, and 3000 (be patient, 500 folks...). The board comes in exciting Christmas red (a real innovation!), and as of December will be able to support 8 megabytes of RAM. And how's this for exciting: a tape backup system that rapidly slurps up 250 mb (around 275 floppies)! And more: a 44 mb removable *cartridge* for those massive projects. All this tied together by an impressive software package - 7 full software products that come with the Nexus and include a disk backup system, a cache memory tool, and a print spooler. Suggested list price: \$299. We also saw their Aries RAM board (also red!), which also comes with good supporting software, including the "Amiga Explorer", which contains system commands documentation and helpful references about AmigaDOS. We expect to hear more from Preferred in the future!

Next, we saw at last the long-awaited Video Toaster! Dave Marshall from Amazing Computers gave us a guided tour of some of the features, especially the special effects switching with up to 4 video inputs.

We watched ourselves fading in and out, bouncing away, rolling over and beaming up! There are 128 possible transitions in the present software, enough to make hams out of the best of us.

(Point a camera at some people, and...) It's got titling and many fonts, a built-in gen-lock, frame grabbing

VIDEO TOASTER

capabilities, a 24-bit paint package, and a 3D animation system, but you've probably heard or read about these before. The treat was to see it all happening! Now, if we just had an Audio Blender...

If this reaches you before the Christmas party, See Ya There! Otherwise, see you at the next meeting. Happy Holidays!

Fort Worth Julia Sookma

Several topics were discussed at our November 10 meeting. Nominations were made for chapter officers for the upcoming year. We will vote the slate of officers at our December meeting. All chapter members come to the meeting and exercise your voting rights!

Just in case there is any question, we will have our regular chapter meeting in December. Since my current newsletter has not arrived yet, I don't know the date for the club Christmas party. We will meet on the second Saturday of the month as usual, unless the club Christmas party is on that day, in which case we will meet the following Saturday. Meetings are at West Berry Church of Christ church on Merida (just off of Berry) at 1:30 - 3:30.

Our topic for November 10 was games. A variety of games were displayed and demonstrated. Several text games were demonstrated: Tass Times in Tonetown (with graphics), Nord & Bert Couldn't Make Head Nor Tail Of It, Portal, and Nine Princes in Amber (with graphics). Party Quiz (a trivia game) was also demonstrated. Along with Atomic Handball (similar to breakout) which is available in the club library. We

had a great time playing the games and giving each other hints to the various ones we brought to the meeting.

Remember, we are meeting in December. Hope to see you there!

H.E.B. Robyn Wilson

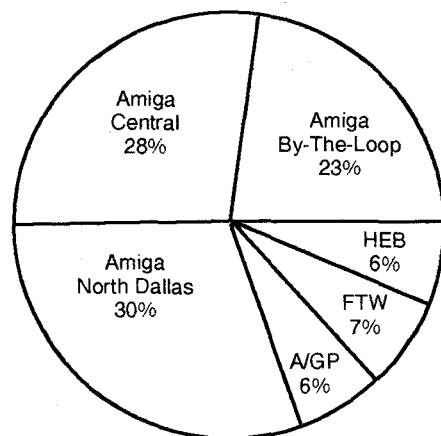
METCOM 90 was held in October and thus we (the members present at the September meeting) decided not to have an October meeting. METCOM was real fun. I stayed there all day and, along with many other people, raided the Flea Market. Most of the hardware and software was Amiga, but the C64 and C128 equipment was almost as prominent. The people who did the work did a fine job of keeping things together.

At the November meeting, the nominees for officers were decided upon. The elections will be held in December. The nominees are as follows:

President - Jesse Cardin
Vice President - none
Secretary/Reporter - Robyn Wilson
Treasurer - Bill Howe
Librarian - Bill Holliday

The next meeting will be held on December 15th at the St. Paul Presbyterian Church located at 4517 Rufe Snow Drive in North Richland Hills. The church is between 820 and Glenview Drive.

Don't forget that the MCCC Christmas party will be held on December 8th from 1 to 4:30 p.m. See your newsletter for more information.



MCCC Board of Directors

Board of Directors

President	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
Vice President	Craig Bird	817-540-3360
Treasurer	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
Secretary	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125
Education Chair	David Anspach	214-438-5684
BBS Coordinator	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Newsletter Editor	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Past President	Jack DeTore	817-275-3762

Assistants

Amiga Library	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825
	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
64/128 Library	Joe Ostrokol	817-534-1990
BBS	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158
	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
	Brad Dumler	817-483-2322
Newsletter	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158

BBS Numbers 817-268-4191 817-268-4196

MCCC Chapter Officers

Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

President	David Owens	817-577-2304
Vice President	Mark Cooke	817-624-8993
Treasurer	Bruce Nelson	817-498-0899
Secretary	Brent Wood	817-246-3707
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125

Arlington-Grand Prairie Chapter

President	Glen Herring	817-572-0489
Vice President	Jim Souba	817-561-1318
Treasurer	Blake Brown	214-642-6107
Secretary	Eddie Allen	214-259-1741
Librarian	Jerry Hiatt	817-649-1358

Amiga Central Chapter

President	Bill Keatley	817-485-0666
Vice President	Ray Howard	214-660-4819
Treasurer	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Secretary	Jack Smith	817-731-8108
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825

Fort Worth Chapter

President	John Sookma	817-293-8691
Vice President	John Sookma	817-293-8691
Treasurer	James Dunnam	817-923-6153
Secretary	Ellen Triplett	817-295-5709
Librarian	Donald Tate	817-926-2078

Amiga North Dallas Chapter

President	Craig Bird	817-540-3360
Vice President	Bob Shary	214-771-8742
Treasurer	Forrest McKinney	214-530-4589
Secretary	Genny White	214-422-7131
Librarian	Wm. Dockendorf	214-407-0564

Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter

President	Eldor Luedtke Jr.	817-377-4135
Vice President	Jon Moreland	214-579-1293
Treasurer	Bill Howe	817-577-3898
Secretary	Robyn Wilson	817-282-3458
Librarian	Anna Luedtke	817-377-4135

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff

The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership

Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$20 per year or \$12 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information

Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising

The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (consecutive three months): Full Page - \$36 (\$96); Half Page - \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page - \$12 (\$32); Business Card - \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles

Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles should be submitted as ASCII text. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText (address "MCCC"), or on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as Amiga IFF files, PageStream structured drawings, or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline

The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is the Monday following the third Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail to P.O. Box 813, Bedford, Texas 76095.

Extra Copies

Extra Copies of the MCCC News may be obtained for \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded to the club along with the required fee. Orders must be received by the regular newsletter deadline.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | | |
|--------|--|--------|--|
| Dec 11 | Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm - N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills
David Owens, 817-577-2304 | Dec 15 | Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter
1:30 pm - St. Paul Presbyterian Church ◀■■■ NOTE
4517 Rufe Snow Drive, N.Richland Hills
Eldor Luedtke, Jr., 817-377-4135 |
| Dec 11 | Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
7:00 pm - Stoneridge Homeowners Assn. Clbhs.
500 Grants Parkway, Arlington
Glen Herring, 817-572-0489 | Dec 19 | Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm - Richardson Civic Center
411 West Arapaho, Richardson
Craig Bird, 817-540-3360 |
| Dec 13 | Amiga West Chapter (forming) ◀■■■ NOTE
7:30 pm - Ridgmar Manor Clubroom
2200 Taxco, Fort Worth
Jack Smith, 817-731-8108 | Dec 20 | Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm - Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington
Bill Keatley, 817-485-0666 |
| Dec 15 | Fort Worth Chapter ◀■■■ NOTE
1:30 pm - West Berry Church of Christ
2701 West Berry, Fort Worth
John Sookma, 817-293-8691 | Jan 5 | MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 am - N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills
Craig Bird, 817-540-3360 |

January Newsletter Deadline - December 10 ◀■■■ NOTE

NORMAL MEETING SCHEDULE

1st Sat	MCCC Board of Directors	2nd Sat	Fort Worth Chapter
2nd Tues	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter	3rd Wed	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
2nd Tues	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter	3rd Thurs	Amiga Central Chapter
2nd Sat	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop	3rd Sat	HEB Chapter
2nd Thurs	Amiga West Chapter		

MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club
P.O. Box 813
Bedford, Texas 76095

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage Paid
Bedford, TX
Permit No. 32

Address Correction Requested

Time Value - Do Not Delay

Don't Forget the MCCC Christmas Party - Dec 8